UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- As United Nations celebrates its forty-ninth anniversary, Secretary-General calls for active support for Organization from people everywhere.

- Secretary-General says Security Council should extend UNAVEM II mandate for one month, citing expectation of Angola peace agreement by end of October.

- United Nations reiterates concern at deterioration of security conditions in Rwandese refugee camps; Department of Humanitarian Affairs to chair task force to examine general situation.

- Secretary-General condemns killing of Sri Lankan presidential candidate and 56 others in Colombo bombing.

- Seven-member Security Council mission leaves New York for Somalia.

- Informal negotiations on draft programme of action for 1995 World Social Summit begin at Headquarters.

- UNPROFOR reports continuing access problems for fuel convoys in Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite commitments made by Bosnian Serbs over weekend.

- Special Political and Decolonization Committee recommends General Assembly condemn militant actions of authorities in Serb-controlled parts of Croatia.

- Yonsei University Central Library in Republic of Korea becomes United Nations depository library.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today said that the United Nations needed the active commitment of people everywhere so that it could continue to play its indispensable role for peace, security and development. In a message for United Nations Day -- the Organization's forty-ninth anniversary -- he said promoting knowledge about the Organization was more important than ever.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The Secretary-General was in London today, on the first stop of a two-week tour of seven States. He marked the Day by receiving a delegation from the United Nations Association of the United Kingdom. He also had lunch with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons, and later met with Prince Charles.

The anniversary was celebrated at Headquarters with the annual United Nations Day concert in the General Assembly Hall. This morning, Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information Samir Sanbar opened the Inter-Agency Information Fair organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI).

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The Secretary-General has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) be extended to 30 November, in the expectation that the Angolan parties will conclude an agreement by 31 October. In a report to the Security Council dated 20 October, he urged the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to make every effort to conclude the Lusaka peace talks by that date. In the meantime, they should exercise restraint and desist from all military operations which could jeopardize the progress achieved so far.

The consolidation of peace in Angola would require urgent international action to ensure that a cease-fire was rapidly established and effectively observed, the Secretary-General continued. He suggested that the Council consider restoring UNAVEM II to its previous strength to enable it to consolidate implementation of the peace agreement at the most critical stage. Angola would continue to need humanitarian assistance, but the focus should shift from emergency relief to support of the peace agreement, as well as rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Both parties, in particular UNITA, must scrupulously respect the neutrality of humanitarian personnel.

Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye had meetings over the weekend with Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos and UNITA President Jonas Savimbi to discuss speeding up the peace process, a United Nations spokesman announced today. It was hoped that an agreement could be initialled some time this week. Meanwhile, the Lusaka talks have been adjourned until Wednesday while UNITA's Political Commission meets in Huambo.

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A United Nations spokesman today expressed concern regarding the deterioration of security conditions in Rwandese refugee camps. Special Representative Shahryar Khan was scheduled to meet today with the Prime Minister of Rwanda to discusss the matter. Meanwhile, the Secretary-General has asked the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to chair a task force comprising various elements of the United Nations system to look into the situation in the camps. The task force will also consider the need for an additional consolidated appeal for humanitarian assistance for Rwanda, and ways and means to support human rights monitors there.

(more)

On Friday, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the threatening presence and activities of former Rwandese army, militia and civilian leaders in the camps had seriously disrupted humanitarian operations. UNHCR field workers reported that the situation was particularly dangerous in camps around Goma, Zaire.

In some camps, the former authorities had virtually taken control of food and relief distribution in order to consolidate their power and to manipulate refugees, according to the UNHCR. Relief workers had been threatened repeatedly, seriously disrupting humanitarian efforts in the camps. Humanitarian agencies and organizations had tried to change the food distribution system, but with little success.

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The Secretary-General today expressed regret at the death of the United National Party candidate for the Sri Lankan Presidency, Gamini Dissanayake. Mr. Dissanayake and at least 56 other people were killed by a bomb in Colombo yesterday. In condemning all such terrorist acts, the Secretary-General expressed hope for an early resumption of the peace process in Sri Lanka.

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A seven-member Security Council mission today left New York for Somalia, according to a United Nations spokesman. The mission is scheduled to arrive in Mogadishu on Wednesday, and is expected to spend two days in the country.

Following consultations of the Council on Friday, Council President Sir David Hannay (United Kingdom) announced that the mission would be composed of the following members: China (Wang Xuexian), France (Hervé Ladsous), New Zealand (Colin Keating), Nigeria (Isaac E. Ayewah), Pakistan (Kamran Niaz), the Russian Federation (Yuriy Fedotov) and the United States (Karl F. Inderfurth). Mr. Keating is Chairman of the mission.

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Negotiators from more than 150 countries today began informal talks aimed at reaching a consensus on the goals of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. The Summit, to be held in Copenhagen next March, will be the first major United Nations conference devoted solely to social development, particularly the increasingly globalized problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. It is seen as the centrepiece of an ongoing cycle of high-level United Nations meetings on development in the 1990s.

A major focus of the week-long talks, which are being held during meetings of the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), will be a revision of the Summit's draft programme of action. The main task will be to reduce the draft to a more manageable length -- the current working paper is 54 pages long -- and to identify priorities among the wide range of issues proposed for inclusion.

Negotiators made major headway last month on the draft declaration, outlining nine broad commitments for ensuring the success of social

development. The resulting document -- the "Chairman's progress report on elements for the Draft Declaration" -- will be used as the basis for negotiations on a final draft.

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Special Representative Yasushi Akashi met with the Bosnian Serb leadership in Pale over the weekend, and received commitments regarding access for United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) fuel convoys to Gorazde, Zepa and Srebrenica. However, a spokesman for the Organization said those commitments did not appear to have been honoured, as only one convoy had reached Gorazde and Zepa today. Meanwhile, there were problems with the security of the land link into Sarajevo.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today reported that 19 humanitarian flights had landed in the Bosnian capital, and that 20 were planned for today. There were no problems with convoy access, allowing aid stockpiles to be replenished.

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The Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) has recommended that the General Assembly condemn the militant actions of the self-proclaimed authorities in Serbian-controlled territories of Croatia. In a draft resolution approved on Friday, the Committee also recommended that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) be requested to immediately cease any military and logistical support to those authorities. The draft was approved by a recorded vote of 111 in favour to none against, with 20 abstentions.

The draft resolution would have the Assembly conclude that the Federal Republic's activities aimed at integrating the occupied territories into its administrative, military, and communication systems were illegal, null and void, and must cease immediately. It would also have the Assembly call on all parties, particularly the Federal Republic, to comply fully with relevant Security Council resolutions and to respect Croatia's territorial integrity.

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Yonsei University Central Library in the Republic of Korea has become a United Nations depository library, one of 338 libraries in 137 countries that bring United Nations documents and publications to users around the world. The University has an enrolment of 30,000 students and 1,900 faculty members.

Since 1946, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at Headquarters in New York, which is part of the Department of Public Information (DPI), has arranged for the distribution of United Nations documents and publications to users around the world through its depository library system. At present, 49 depository libraries in Africa, 89 in Asia and the Pacific, 28 in Eastern Europe, 77 in Western Europe, 43 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 52 in North America receive those materials, on the understanding that they will be maintained in good order and be available to the public free of charge.

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